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Out of such conferences, called at such a time as this, and in this spirit, no one can forecast the immeasurable benefits which we may reasonably expect to follow. We are convinced that the conferees are quite well aware that the abiding results will be found in the new international policies which they will recognize and promote. An extended international co-operation is on the way. The United States will gladly join, for the international policies of the day that is to be will spring inevitably from those experiences consonant with American political science and recognized by all as acceptable and practicable. It is for this reason that the American Peace Society has sent to all officially connected with the conferences the pamphlet and letter self-explanatory copies of which appear elsewhere in these columns. Every friend of the Conference on the Limitation of Armament will be interested to recall and review the principles therein set forth, not only because they are acceptable to America, but because they are consonant with the international achievements throughout a worthy past. We have no doubt that the principles therein set forth are germane to the meditations of this and of the succeeding conferences sure to follow. They will yet be incorporated more firmly into the practice of nations, for they relate very fundamentally to the international policies of the approaching tomorrows. They are certainly very pertinent to those high matters relating to the promotion of a peace of justice between nations.

LIMITING ARMAMENTS

(WRITING NOVEMBER 11.)

TO THE man on the street it seems difficult to understand why it is necessary to have so many experts at the Washington conference. He inquires, if the object of the conference is to limit armaments, why not limit them and adjourn?

Of course, the job is not so simple as that. One Power will say that for every naval item given up there must be an equivalent given up by the other naval Powers. Some of the big Powers will insist that the present ratio of naval strength shall be maintained, in order that they may not be placed in positions weaker than the ones they now occupy. We understand that the British have accepted, it is not necessary to know with what grace, the principle of equality of naval strength with the United States. Naturally, it will be argued, steps must be taken to see that the difference in strength of the two navies shall at least not be increased. We are told that the American delegation has agreed upon certain definitions. For example, the phrase "limitation of armament" is held to mean that all the nations shall be permitted to finish the building

programs already authorized. By "reduction of armament" is meant that vessels still in commission shall be scrapped when obsolete, and that they shall not be replaced; indeed, that the expense of keeping up these old vessels shall be eliminated.

It will probably be found necessary to define what is meant by "replacement" with respect to vessels now in first-class condition, but which in time will become inferior in value to new types. It is necessary to decide what is meant by "naval strength." It would seem reasonable to include merchant marine and all auxiliary vessels capable of being converted into war ships, as well as all bases, fortified or unfortified, if capable of use in naval operations.

Naturally, there will be many differences of opinion about all these matters. Decisions with reference to them will have to be made in accordance with the facts. Take the matter of the millions of dollars spent annually to maintain naval bases and repair stations at remote points. Naturally, this relates to a possible naval conflict in the Pacific, where the bases of operations are quite as important as the vessels themselves. Such matters, and there are many others, present a maze of scientific and quasi-scientific, political, and economic problems incapable, in our judgment, of solution, but which will have to be carefully studied before there can be any hope of agreement.

We are told that the navy is presenting alternative plans—one predicated on a diplomatic settlement of various disputes in the Far East; another, perfect agreement with reference to fortifications. We have no doubt that there are others. In our judgment, one of the most difficult of all the problems is to overcome a certain prejudice, the *amour propre*, of the various military branches of the governments. The different branches of the naval service will find it difficult to agree among themselves as to which class of death-dealing instrument can most safely be reduced. The point, however, here is that the conference bids fair to open amid a *mélange* of divergent views and interests. Thus far, no one has risen to suggest a sure and acceptable way out of the maze.

Yet there would seem to be a simple way out of the difficulty. Why can't the nations agree to limit their expenditures for war to a certain percentage of their income? We don't know what percentage the nations could be brought to accept; but the principle seems both simple and reasonable. The United States is spending 93 per cent of its income because of war. This percentage does not vary materially in England, France, Italy, Japan. Manifestly, the percentage is too high. Why not agree, as a start, to cut the expense pay to 70 per cent? There would be every advantage in such a plan. This is particularly true if the nations are inter-

ested to promote peace rather than to promote war. If they are interested to promote war, the conference can accomplish nothing. If they are interested to promote peace, they ought to be willing to agree to spend not to exceed 70 per cent of their income for purposes of war. If such a plan were adopted, each nation could fool away its money upon any type of war machine it saw fit, so long as the total expense did not exceed the percentage agreed upon. The self-esteem of no particular military interests would be touched. They who believe in the necessity for effective death-dealing instruments could accept such a solution without violence to their faith. Reducing military expenses by 23 per cent would release enormous sums for constructive social effort in science, education, industry, and the arts. It would be a limitation indeed. It would go a long way toward meeting the demands of the stricken peoples of the world. It would be an attestation of faith and good will. It would remove the problem of international relations from the realm of militarism to the realm of economics and finance. It would immeasurably strengthen the coming generation for the great tasks immediately before.

We do not contend that this solution is simple. It presents its own difficulties. Some will say the percentage is too low, others that it is too high. Some will be interested to know what is meant by the word "income." Our only thought is that among the suggestions brought to our attention, this presents the fewest difficulties.

REDUCING ARMAMENT

(WRITING NOVEMBER 12.)

THE VIEWS we dared to express yesterday relative to the method of reducing armaments are not the views of the American delegates to the Conference on the Limitation of Armament. Mr. Hughes has voiced the collective judgment of the American conferees, and the reduction, it appears, is to be not in percentages of income, but in terms of battleships. The capital ship programs, actual and projected, are to be abandoned. Certain older ships are to be scrapped. Thus we are presented with concrete proposals, looking toward a definite agreement for the limitation of naval armament. The imperative economic demands are to be met, at least in part. The spirit of the American proposal is action. "Plausible suggestions of postponement" and "impracticable counsels of perfection" are ignored. The American pronouncement is, in substance, the way to reduce is to reduce.

We see difficulties in the way of this approach to the problem. It will be said that the day of the battleship has passed. Scrapping the battleships, therefore, will

have little influence upon the problems of war and peace. The new inventions and the new instruments of destruction in the air, on the sea, under the sea, the more deadly explosives and poisonous gases will leave the same old suspicions, hatreds, and prospects of war. International policies are not touched by such a proposal. In the light of these things, even the good faith of America may be questioned in various quarters.

But we do not sympathize with this counsel of pessimism. The American proposal itself is a policy of real international importance. It will end in a relief from the burdens of taxation. It is surprisingly simple. Devoid of international offense, the plan is reasonable and seems to be realizable. Its direct, unequivocal, unconventional approach takes the whole problem from the realm of the merely exclusive interest to that of the common advantage. If it appear to be business idealism, it is ideal business. It is a dare to the destroying, silly, damning philosophy of brute force. It is a fine intelligence applied to international affairs. Free as it is from all atmosphere of the old dickering diplomacy, it forecasts a new order in the world. By it the peace movement is raised again from the cry of impotence to the plane of practical achievement. As by magic, the collective conscience, the common soul of human kind, has become vocal once more, somewhat as was the case November 11, 1918. Coming from a country abundantly able to compete with other nations to the uttermost, the voice is the voice of strength. Men listening to the American Secretary of State felt again with that ancient writer of Proverbs, that "the righteous are bold as a lion." They who listened felt the intensity and force of the situation. This November 12 the world is thrilled, and the day will be remembered as marking an epoch in history.

IS THE END OF WAR POSSIBLE?

IN HIS address November 11 over the grave of the unknown soldier, President Harding heartened men to believe again in the possibility of a warless world. Is the end of war possible? Since the month of July, 1914, there have been comparatively few bold enough to say openly that the abolition of international wars is an achievable ideal. Statesmen, addressing themselves to the problems of international peace, have contented themselves with some such expressions as "lessening the evils of war," "reducing the frequency of wars," "making war less certain." Writers and speakers are wont to qualify their efforts in behalf of international peace with these remarks: "Of course, it is impossible to overcome all wars"; "We have always had war and we shall always have war"; "We can only work for the postponement of war." Statesmen, public men gen-